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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES OF RESIDENTS OF ECOVILLAGES IN RUSSIA

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Abstract

The paper describes the theoretical approaches to the concept of the social ecological practices, and their structure. The individual ecological practices of residents of ecovillages were identified.

Key words: *social ecological practices, ecovillage, social action, social structure and interaction, ecological activity, organic farming*

The logic of human civilization development has led to disorders in the functioning of biosphere, so by the end of the XX century, environmental issues has been deeply embedded in the scope of researches being made by scientists from all kinds of scientific fields.

Scientists associated the catastrophic changes in the environment with the spiritual crisis, drawing the fundamental conclusion that the core of expanding global ecological crisis consists of anthropocentric worldview, technocratic mindset and consumer society values embodied in the environmental practices of resource consumption, lack of ecological culture, integrated environmental knowledge and lack of scientifically-developed ways of solving these issues. The present ecological situation in Russia and around the world can be defined as critical.

The modern way to meet the needs of the world population is intrinsically leading to accelerating process of wildlife extermination and destruction of natural human habitats as well as to destruction of his spiritual and physical nature. Indicators of human health, social unrest, and low biological quality of food are the indicators of catastrophic state of environment.

Unsolved environmental issues are closely related to the permanent modernization of Russian society. Modern Russia is a completely new state by its structure and nature with completely different, both by intention and function, components of social structure, which undergo a continuous transformation process. Right before our eyes, during more than twenty years, almost everything has been changing drastically and in the most unpredictable way: natural climatic characteristics, type of ownership, state structure, social structure of population, state borders, etc. Changing ourselves, we change the world around us. According to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Russia is a social welfare state, which purpose is to create the conditions providing good living standard and free development of a person. The reforms carried out in the country are aimed at achievement of this very purpose. They regard the perfection of mechanisms of a state policy implementation as of paramount importance, both in the sphere of natural resource use, and in the social sphere corresponding to the realities of our time. But by today, these essential mechanisms have not been developed yet for many reasons.

Today, the experience and practice of developed countries show that obsession with macroeconomic indicators is replaced by understanding of need to integrate social and economic policies. Moreover, social aspects and the human factor take center stage when making economic decisions and are considered as one of the key political factors of national development.

Social contradictions associated with the change of government, growth of social tension, increasing number of ethnic conflicts, inflation, population health deterioration shows a consistent trend for further increase. When describing modern Russian society, we cannot but note that its social structure, considered as a set of relatively stable relations between differentiated social groups, represents a result of differences in terms of development of individuals, social status inequalities and access to economic resources and benefits. As a result of changes happened in Russian society (drop in production and living standards, redistribution of property), there took place a split of society into the rich governing minority (8-10%), and the poor majority alienated from government (80-90% of the population), degradation and lumpenization of working, peasant, and the intellectuals [Goncharov, 2002].

Specifics of modern Russian society, among other things, is that globalization is superimposed on a controversial process of transformation, accompanied by deepening social inequalities and marginalization of a significant part

of the population. Transformation of Russian society not only inevitably caused changes in the social structure, but also pointedly raised the issue of individual and group social identity awareness, integration and disintegration, a place in the social hierarchy, solidarity, unity degree and value system before the traditional communities [Golenkova, 2003].

Change of real social and group communities (according to different criteria) and examination of their action patterns, the “equality – inequality” relations are reflected in people's minds and, in general, in the public mind. The analysis of data associated with sociological researches of modern Russian society in the sphere of dynamic development of socio-structural processes and identification of quantitative and qualitative changes in them shows, by our strong belief, the dynamics of interaction between different social groups, layers, strata and formation of class and group interests, as well as the change of foundations of social identity and social differentiation factors. Therefore, the basic form of functioning of modern Russian society is a Social interaction, which takes into account many-sided and multi-level nature of social transformation processes.

Those with the most optimistic attitudes still admit that the balance of the ecosystem continues being destroyed, and the material needs of the mankind majority are still not satisfied, and the responsibility lies with the continuous modernization of society. At the end of the XX century, Russia was involved in modernization process, which affected the correction of system of values, purposes and type of the socio-cultural development that caused change in everyday practice. These changes, as the social experience of other countries shows, are only one step in solving the problem of improving the efficiency of public administration system in modern Russia, which is essential for constructive activity related to creation or modification, as well as implementation of these very social ecological practices into everyday social practices of our society. But along with the complex and paradoxical process of modernization, there takes place the institutionalization of environmental concerns and needs of the population based on environmental awareness reflected in the tapestry of ecological practices. Social environmental practices give area for reflection of stringent requirements for development, which were determined by N.N. Moiseev as an "ecological imperative", i.e. the complex of those restrictions in the modern practice of society, the violation of which threatens to bring catastrophic consequences to mankind.

This process is based on the development of a new civilization model capable to resist the permanent global ecological crisis. It has been created since 1992, when 179 countries signed two key documents at the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro: "The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development", which was aimed at establishing a new global partnership between countries in order to maintain a healthy environment for all the people around the world, and "Agenda 21" - action plan with regard to sustainable development.

These two documents suggest regional natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, environmentally friendly use of high technologies, changing consumption patterns, achieving equilibrium between society and natural environment, harmonization of their relations on the basis of compliance with the laws of biosphere development [Agenda ..., 2014].

Despite the numerous publications that have appeared in various fields of humanities knowledge - sociology, social philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, the understanding of social practices in environmental sociology does not correspond to the level of modern scientific rationality. Conceptual approaches to the sociological analysis of social environmental practice issues need further theoretical justification and detailed methodological study. At the same time, there is an urgent need for objective study of the problems of social and environmental practices using effective scientifically valid methods of sociology.

Formation of new social and environmental practices and their wide distribution through the system of scientific sociological awareness, study and ecological culture education may help to overcome the ecological crisis, satisfy basic needs, but at the moment it is not completely covered in modern Russian and foreign scientific literature. It is caused by underdevelopment of the ecological paradigm, lack of true nation-wide interest to the modern ecological perspective except particular utilitarian tasks. However many Russian scientists reviewed environmental issues in their work.

However, the study of contemporary social environmental practices has deep roots and scientific tradition in foreign and domestic sociology. The concept of social practice lies in the basis of many social action and everyday routine theories.

A particular contribution to the development of sociological theory of practices, study of everyday interactions and phenomena of a "lifeworld" was made by P. Bourdieu, A. Giddens , A. Schütz , P. Sztompka; the issue of conscious social action nature is one of the most important sociological theories of M. Weber, T. Parsons, R. Merton, V. Pareto; the problem of relations between society, human and nature was studied by E. Fromm, as well as the problem of alienation and sensually subjective human activity by K. Marx, the information society by E. Toffler, social construction of reality by P. Berger, T. Luckmann and others. Many Russian scientists

reviewed the ecological perspective in their works – V. I. Vernadsky [1991], N. Fedorov [1994], N. Moiseyev [1990], A.G Zdravomyslov [1986], T.I. Zaslavskaya [2004], E.S. Markaryan [1973], V.P. Ivanov [1977], A.D. Ioseliani, V. I. Medvedev, A.A. Aldasheva [Medvedev, Aldasheva, 2001], O. Yanitsky [1998], and others [Rybakova, 2006; Kulyasov, 2003]; The development of society and influence of environmental risks and threats on it were reviewed by A.D. Ursul [1988], V. I. Danilov-Danilyan [2000; Danilov-Danilyan, Losev, 2000], A.L. Samsonova [2000], V. I. Vernadsky [1991], A.S. Shcheulin, I. M. Aleksandrovich, S. L. Bartanova [Shcheulin, Aleksandrovich, Bartanova, 2004], V. V. Ivanov [2002], and others.

To perform the sociological analysis of social environmental practices, we need to consider its structure, each element of which is organically bound to and interacts with others. The structure of social ecological practice includes: practicable activity that have an object and subject, motives, interests, which turn into purposes. The action itself that meets the needs of the subject or actor, along with the behavior based on consciousness of the subjects that gives area for reflection of knowledge and images of culture and the socio-cultural and natural environment are combined inside the socio-ecological system, where the practice is actually performed. To analyze the structure we can use the method proposed by Robert Merton that studies the social structure of a country through the prism of two interrelated variables: 1) *purposes* determined by culture; 2) institutional *means* to achieve these purposes. Contradictions between means and purposes, their character and sharpness, influence whether people accept public purposes and whether they use regulatory or illegal means to achieve them. The structure keeps stable equilibrium and is stable enough when the majority of society members can achieve their purposes and development opportunities. However, in real life, as a rule, there is a greater or lesser imbalance of relationship between means and purposes, which contributes to the emergence of different ways used by individuals to adapt to the social conditions.

A programmed representative of the consumer society is replaced by a man with expressed environmental needs, filled with ideas of preservation of life on Earth and implementing ecological activities and environmental management.

The sociological approach to the study of society and, in particular, in the framework of the structural and functional paradigm, the society is understood as a system, which consists of an integral complex of interrelated elements bound by functional relationships and connections with each other for some period of time, where the social ecological practice is determined by purposeful activity of individuals.

In the structure of social ecological practices of the society, one of basic elements is a social action which is a key category in M. Weber's works: Action is social when, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual(s), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby guided [Weber, 1990].

According to M. Weber, not all behaviorals act of an individual may be considered as a social actions. Action acquires social nature when it includes two fundamental points:

1) subjective motivation of the individual who means something particular by the act;

2) orientation towards other people.

Awareness and meaningfulness are the keys to understanding of social action. To give meaning to the action is to achieve awareness of one's correlation to the world. The act bearing some meaning, an individual brings an object in the process of giving the meaning, so that when giving it a meaning, he gives it a value at the same time. When determining the value as a form of human thinking and reasoning method, Weber correlates human with the world of things, people and spiritual phenomena. The bearer of values is a person that comprehends them in the process of internal acceptance and denial. He needs them to distinguish purposes set by the will of man.

Weber speaks of the need to find a connection between a series of actions by constructing an ideal typical model of social action of an individual and correlation of existing knowledge with economic, political, aesthetic, moral and modern ecological values.

Creation of an ideal-type model is a methodological tool that allows you analyzing social realities and, above all, social actions of individuals. Weber's typology of social action is based on comprehension of the relation, as correlation by sense and orientation of behavior of several people.

When analyzing the behavior of people in real life based on the methodology of ideal types along with the principle of increasing rationality, Weber identified four types of social action based on interrelation of purposes, means and motives: purposeful rational, value-oriented rational, affective and traditional.

Value-oriented rational and purposeful rational actions are determined by Weber as social ones, as they deal with subjectively intended meaning. "Purposeful rational acts are performed by the individual, whose behavior is

focused on the purpose, means and indirect result of his actions, and who rationally considers the interrelation between means used for the purpose and indirect results and, finally, the interrelation between various possible purposes, i.e., in any case, he acts not affectively and nonconventionally" [Weber, 1996].

To analyze social ecological practices, purposeful rational and value-rational actions are of main interest. The personality possessing ecological values expressed in personal ecological practices are willing to take responsibility for his life, return to traditional close-knit families and good neighborhood, gain confidence in the future, dramatically reduce the negative impact on nature, create a favorable environment for their children, restore the lost culture covering all aspects of human and social life and regain a sense of joy and creativity.

Each individual involved in public action, relies to some extent on the fact that other members of the union (approximately and on average) are going to participate according to the established agreement and takes it a basis for rational orientation of his own behavior.

Social ecological practices pervade the human lifeworld, which A. Schütz determines as world of common sense - intuitively reliable and perceived integrally, having a dual nature. On the one hand, this is a life experience of one individual (experience of everyday life); on the other hand, this is an experience of many people, which is an intersubjective experience. Common meanings shared by many and giving understanding of each other are the life world, which is unique, on the one hand, because each person has his own life experience, but, on the other hand, it is social as it incorporates the experience of many people. Individual social environmental practices reflect not only the experience of the bearer, but also the historical experience of his ancestors, as well as connection with the future.

Individual social and ecological practice is expressed in certain actions; to achieve deeper understanding of it, it is necessary to use a psychological approach, developed by V. Pareto.

Pareto pays special attention to the social microcosm and its main factors - the specific human actions, the actions of others, and their social behavior. "There are actions that use means appropriate to ends and which logically link means with ends. There are also other actions where this characteristic is absent. These two classes of action are quite different, depending on whether we consider them from objective or subjective aspect" [Goffman, 2001].

Pareto added illogical actions to rational logical actions developed by M. Weber. Illogical actions are based on feelings rather than on rational thinking and scientific method. According to Pareto, the feelings of a person play the most important role: "Feelings and interests are the most constant; therefore they are the most important components of any phenomena" [Pareto, 1996]. Feelings are associated with a mental make-up of people, so they are a source of society functioning as a system consisting of sentient individuals. Illogical actions of people bear another kind of logic – logic of feelings. Any human activity is associated with influence of certain feelings. In positive social ecological practices of individuals, feelings and emotions play a very important role. Studying the relationships between a person and society, E. Fromm considered ability of adaptation to human nature as a key factor of healthy society, as it successfully allows solving problems of human existence. A person can adapt to almost any social, cultural and natural system, as he has a complex system of adaptation. In the process of social interaction with a healthy environment, a human is an active and responsible member of society, a master of his life. His life purpose is to be much, instead of possess much. The fundamental condition of the pathological society is unlimited consumption as a life purpose. In the modern consumer society things are used on a one-off basis, so egoism, greediness and aggression grow in the members of the society, which leads to conflicts and social tension.

The practice concept is a key element of the ecological practice category that differs significantly from idealistic constructs. Marx considered the world through sensually subjective human activity, which is a cornerstone of all public life, and which determines the development of society and an individual. The Marxist formula says "from contemplation to abstract thought, and from it to practice", where the criterion of truth is a practice of environmental change. Marx emphasized that irrespective of the extent of people attitudes to nature, the products of human labor will always have a material substratum, which is separate from "nature without the help of man" [Marx, Engels, 1954]. Marx associated the mechanism of person dehumanization with alienation process – forming of an "alien wishes" in social subjects in the context of economic and social structures. Under alienation, Marx and Engels understood social relations and the way of perception of the world, when a person becomes alienated from himself. Alienated person in the grip of irrational forces creates idols in the shape of money, possessions, cult figures, etc. He does not unlock his own humanistic potential, as the idols he created prevail and take over him.

In the process of alienation, people lose their own social, spiritual and creative potential. Summarizing the consequences of alienation, Marx distinguishes four positions. "Alienated labor of a person" alienates him

from 1) the nature, 2) himself, his life activity; 3) "generic essence of human being – both nature and his spiritual ancestral legacy – turns into an alien essence, a means to maintain his individual existence", 4) "alienation of a man from the man happens. When a man confronts himself, he also confronts other men." [Marx, Engels, 1954].

The replacement of antagonistically contradictory process of labor division is possible through the active and pragmatic approach to the world transformation: "it is a question of revolutionizing the existing world, of practically attacking and changing existing things" [Marx, Engels, 1954].

The general sense of the practice criterion follows from the fact that human society is a constituent part of a uniform material world, the highest achievement of progressive development in nature. Interaction with nature is a necessary condition for the existence of a human society. The work "Theses on Feuerbach" by K. Marx and F. Engels pays the attention to connection between society and nature, which is expressed in labor and in practical change of the nature by people.

Using the civilizational approach developed by N.Y. Danilevsky and based on the principle of separation of natural and social, sensual and rational, to analyze the social ecological practices, allowed him introducing into the scientific discourse the concept of cultural and historical type. Each cultural and historical type goes through its own cycle of development and completion. Modern post-industrial society is characterized as an informational civilization. It is based on information and communication networks characterized by socio-cultural changes, where the process of urbanization becomes a source of destruction of natural environment and urbanization. The city provides the massification of behavior, the material, educational and cultural needs are satisfied at a higher level. But the development of information and communication networks provides the fact that the world is becoming a "global village", according to the terminology of M. McLuhan. Technological capabilities allow us entering an ecologically comfortable industry and a diversified, decentered, resource-conserving biotech production and make a transition to humanitarian economy, aimed at recreation and natural environment preservation, and also allow the society providing the involvement and participation of all its members in the social spatiotemporal structures. The development of computer technology and communication means in the Third Wave would lead, according to A. Toffler, to a change in the structure of employment, and in combination with the increasing intellectualization of labor, to the so-called "electronic cottages" that would transfer work from office to the home of a worker. "...apart from altering the actual character of work, the new production system could shift literally millions of jobs out of the factories and offices into which the Second Wave swept them and return right back where they came from originally: the home. [Toffler, 1999]. With an electronic cottage and a land parcel, equipped with electronics and computer automatic systems, which provide a high level of communication and access to information, and allow many activities without leaving home.

The family once again becomes the center of social life and family values become important.

In general terms, the definition of social ecological practices is as follows: it is a special kind of practices of an individual historical subject, which uses social institutions or creates them itself, being in the system of social interaction. It affects the system of social relations, changes society, social groups, individuality and socio-ecological environment [Rybakova, 2012].

The tendency of designing and creation of a new socionatural system is performed today in ecovillages. In Russia, the initiatives of creation of ecovillages began to arise in the 80s – early 90s, as a reaction of society to socioeconomic and ecological crisis. The main reason for creation of ecovillages lies in overcoming of alienation in different areas of life. This requires a change of mind-set and lifestyle, to bringing them into harmony with nature, creating a friendly and social environment. The idea of creating ecovillages in Russia has historical roots: before the revolution in 1917, Russia was an agrarian country with a peasant population of 100 million people. In the Russian peasant community, evolved an optimum for survival form of a peasant commune. The natural environment was an integral part of life and production in rural areas. Direct people's democracy in decision-making, non-recognition of personal land ownership, right to sell and inherit it, are the sacred ideas of the Russian community. These very ideas contained the first collectivist principles of the Russian peasant world, which today are reflected in the initiatives of ecovillages creation.

Ecovillages are a multidimensional and effective economic econatural complex that covers all major forms of human life in harmony with nature. Creation of ecovillages in Russia is associated with the emergence of a new ecological worldview, based on careful attitude to nature, balanced interaction with it, involvement of the intellectual potential of the country to face massive environmental challenges and risks; although the prospects for the development of ecovillages are considered by the experts as a slow, undulating process, depending on the state of economy. During the crisis periods, the number of people in ecovillages grows. But overall prospects for the ecovillages development are more positive, as many people want to change their lives.

The analysis of an ecovillage as a new socio-cultural and ecological system along with the study of social ecological practices of the ecovillage residents required a semi-structured interview with the residents of Garmonia, Slavnoye, Mirodolye ecovillages located in the Central region of Russia, within the framework of research conducted with the participation of the author in February-April 2012. On the basis of this research material, Shchukina M.Y. from the Department of Sociology of D. Mendeleyev University of Chemical Technology has written a graduation work [Rybakova, Shchukina, 2012].

She used the additional methods of direct observation of their lives in the ecovillage and the comparative analysis of their own vision of life in the ecovillage. Indeed, the organization in ecovillages is community-based; they have an organization charter and basic rules of social life. The management is based on meetings of ecosettlers, where all the issues and problems either of one family or a whole village and ecovillage complex are solved).

The basis of social ecological practices of the residents consists of the following principles, based on ecological ethics and traditions of environmental management: arrangement of green area for a family on 1 hectare of land, use of environmentally friendly materials, friendly atmosphere in communication with neighbors, spiritual, moral and creative development of an individual, life in harmony with nature, healthy lifestyle, organic farming, self-sufficiency, use of alternative sources of energy to maintain the traditions of their culture.

The residents of ecovillages, having equal numbers of men and women, have the following characteristics: age from 30 to 50, young people forms the majority of settlers. Many of them have two or more Diplomas of Higher Education: technical, legal, economic, medical and pedagogical education; they are also the representatives of different professions: engineers, physicists, constructors, designers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, bank employees, musicians, businessmen, entrepreneurs, etc. Their home regions are different: they are the citizens of Moscow, Moscow region, Ryazan, Murmansk, Novorossiysk, etc. Most commonly, the village region coincides with the home region. Some respondents noted that they looked for land in the same region, where they lived. The main objective of ecovillages creation, in their opinion is to offer the society a new model for an alternative lifestyle in harmony with nature, improve quality of life by creating a favorable environment and social conditions. According to the majority of respondents, ecovillage is a voluntary association of independent, self-reliant people who follow the principles of ecology and have an ownership of land, house and property. The residents also mentions that the establishment of ecovillage is a new alternative way of civilization development, which gives an opportunity for human to create and build with their own hands and restore the ecological balance of the environment.

Social ecological practices are being developed in the villages: they include organic farming, environmental actions, projects, alternative energy, waste management, vegetarian dietary practices, self-preservation behavior, use of eco-friendly materials when building a house. The mindset of the village residents is based on the ideas that are close to deep ecological and environmental ethics. The villagers pay particular attention to practices of communication with nature and its phenomena, learn to understand it: *"here you start feeling a natural rhythm, you feel summer, and you feel how autumn and winter come" (A, Slavnoye)*

They believe that nature starts helping a man if he comes with an open heart and love: *"our flowers and plants, they've changed [...] medicinal herb began to grow [...] they didn't before [...] They say - the more worms, the better the earth ... we were digging earth earlier - there were no worms, and now we find many of them[...] we're digging by hayfork, because we don't want to cut them"(NN, Garmonia), " We should keep the balance to feel good and the nature could feel good ... and the earth thanks us ... it's amazing that there are so many mushrooms growing around the house"(AT, Garmonia).*

We can also refer the green fence planting to social environmental practice. It is a wood strip along the perimeter of the estate, as well as an area of forest, park or alley within the territory of the estate, which takes at least a third of the land parcel area. Planting of forest and creation of a green fence are indispensable elements of the estate. They plant mainly wild-growing trees, depending on the climatic conditions, but there are sometimes trees rare for our climate, like sequoia, hazel tree and cedar. To create favorable conditions for rare species of trees, some people use the dome shaped greenhouses, adopt experience of foreign and Russian practitioners of natural farming. The permaculture experience of Sepp Holzer from Austria is the most popular in the settlements. The areas intended for agriculture and horticulture have the best land for self-dependence of a family on food. Creation of ecovillage is based on the principle that natural environment dominates over the man-made environment and represents a complete forest-park territory that forms a uniform ecosystem. When building a village, some elements are preserved, like small woods, forest plantations, lakes, brooks with surrounding vegetation in the form of natural landscapes. Some residents artificially create a pond in the territory of their estates.

The arrangement of estates relative to each other should not lead to long corridor-like passages that may cause permanent air draughts, which would not help to create a favorable microclimate in the village.

There should be no drivethroughs across the village. Wide roads within the village should be carefully complemented with trees located along the pedestrian and traffic areas. Narrow roads are bordered by trees that belong to the green fences of estates. Geometric arrangement of parcels should minimize the cost of laying the possible utility structures. To let the settlers meet more often and experience the joy of face-to-face communication with each other, public places of infrastructure and recreation areas are located close to each other, for example in the village center. Organic farming is a type of social ecological practices, as it implies the absence of fertilizers and pesticides, worsening nutritional value of products and reducing stability of crops to diseases and pests. Dietary practices are also involved in social ecological practices; they are characterized by vegetarianism, raw food diet and avoidance of harmful products (farinaceous foods, sweet food). The main food is composed of potatoes, cereal and grain porridge, vegetables and seasonal stock food, home-made products, mushrooms, berries, nuts, milk.

Social ecological practices of the villages include practices of health support and healthy lifestyle.

Many of those moved to the village notice the improvement of their health. *"It was our purposeful, deliberate decision to create a lifestyle that supports our own health," (O, Slavnoye).* Fresh air, water, physical labor, good mood, healthy food, and favorable social atmosphere affect health in the best possible way. *"All diseases are caused by nerves, so health also depends on nerves" (DS, Mirodolye).* They perform collective and individual health practices - gymnastics, yoga, qigong, cold water treatment. The villagers are encouraged to quit smoking and drinking alcohol. Many respondents noted that they have given up smoking because of moving to the village. The respondents drink alcohol only on holidays. One of the respondents noted the change of motivation associated with alcohol consumption: "*The purpose is not to achieve satiation, but to drink something tasty*" (D, Mirodolye).

The residents noted that they get ill much more rarely than in the city. The nature of disease has changed: *"We noticed that here we get ill for a day or two, and then it vanishes" (I, Slavnoye).* In case of cold-related diseases they widely use folk medicine - herbs and honey. Some residents keep medications just in case, but they are trying to do without them. To have their own doctor in the villages is rather common; there are people with medical education and work experience in health care facilities. In the hypothetical case of a serious chronic diseases exacerbation, the residents of villages would not refuse the assistance of qualified professionals.

They practice in-home birth in the villages. The couples actively share their experience of children birth, because they believe that the home environment is more harmonious, natural, and favorable for a newborn baby. The obstetric aid type is always chosen by parents.

The solution of health issues is closely bound to issues of food and hygiene that generally form a healthy lifestyle and ecological practice.

The residents of ecovillages are intellectual, highly educated, creative persons having a positive life position, with developed self-organization, taking active part in political, economic, social and spiritual life of the country, leading a healthy lifestyle, and possessing various social ecological practices.

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